GATCOMBS BANJO & GUITAR GAZETTE

VOL. I, No. 6. JULY & AUGUST, 1888. SINGLE COPY, TEN CENTS. FIFTY CENTS PER ANNUM.

BANJO VS. CRITIC.

At the commencement of this article, I do not wish to be understood as trying to bolster up the banjo, as I am confident that the instrument itself, speaks for itself, and it does not require one helping hand to make it what it now is, a most popular and beautiful musical instrument. What I shall do is to give a plain (and I believe) true statement of facts concerning the banjo, which have been brought to my notice during the time that I have had experience as teacher and performer upon this much abused instrument. The highly educated musician commonly called *Critic*, who claims that it is torture for him to listen to anything but so called *Classical music* condemns the banjo.

Go with me (if you will for the sake of argument) to the theatre. Crowded to its utmost with the elite of any city, crowded with people representing the majority of the musical brains, talent, and education of that city, and have the entertainment a musical one. Varied somewhat; but upon the whole what one would call a classical (or nearly so) programme.

Seat yourself by this highly educated musical *critic* and follow him, with me, through the programme and I think I can convince the bitterest enemy of the banjo, that I am at least right and that this article contains a few grains of truth at least.

The concert opens with a *classical* orchestral selection. It meets the approval of our *critic* and his educated audience, and is greeted with a clapping of hands, not loud but modest, a nod here and there to a friend, the exclamations "How beautiful" so esquisite" &c.

All the rest of the classical numbers on the programme are greeted in the same manner. Not during that whole evening have you heard a good hearty round of applause, but our *critic* has his eyes turned heavenward and he is enraptured.

The next number on the programme is a solo upon the poor forlorn banjo, with no beautiful orchestral accompaniment to cover up the little flaws, should there be any, only a simple piano accompaniment.

As our *Critic's* eyes rest on the announcement, his nose has a morbid desire to inspect its owner's forehead and his numerous musical friends are also afflicted with the same nasal difficulty.

The performer makes his entrance, (and we will suppose him to be an artist) takes his seat, faces his cold cold audience and commences a selection of any first-class composer or arranger, full of harmony, difficult and intricate chords. He commences with a field of ice in front of him. Now watch carefully the expression of our *Critic's* face and the expression of the faces of his highly educated friends. The faces which at first were as hard and cold as marble, seem to relax as does our critic's, imperceptible to him and them, but they are forced to, against their will and musical morals, by the music which comes to their ears from the banjo, The ice is beginning to melt and the banjo is once more started on its way to another victory. The relaxation continues. The eyes which at the commencement were cold and stern, brighten, and the faces of that whole audience denote perfect contentment and true appreciation. The performer has finished and simultaneously from all parts of the house bursts forth a storm of hearty applause, the first real applause of the evening.

The ice is melted, and the banjo has gained another victory.

The instrument that for years went hand in hand with the colored race, condemned by nearly every one, has by its own merit, (I say merit because what there has been brought out of the banjo could have been brought out years before) so I say by its own merit it has worked its way from the slave cabin of the negro to the drawing room of the millionaire as well as the humble cot of the laborer.

Its sweet and inspiring strains can be heard issuing forth from the marble fronted mansion, as well as from the crowded tenement. Played in the one, by the fair and jewelled hands of the heiress and in the other by the hard and horny hands of the honest laborer.

This I think proves conclusively that the banjo is at least holding its own, with others, as a musical instrument in utter disregard of our classical Critic.

CHAS. G. PORTER.

Watertown, N. Y., May 6th, 1888.

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Published Bi-Monthly by

L. B. GATCOMB & CO.,

No. 30 Hanover St., Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

Edited by B. E. SHATTUCK.

RATES OF ADVERTISING:

1 Column, 1 insertion	$8 00
1-2 " 1 "	5 00
1 inch, 1 "	1 25

On yearly advertisements we make 20 per cent. discount from above rates.

Advertisements under the heading "Prominent Teachers of Banjo Guitar and Mandolin," two lines, $1 00 per year; additional lines 50 cents per line.

Advertisements under the heading "New Music," one insertion, 4 lines, 50 cents; additional lines 12 1-2 cents per line.

Press of Geo. M. Tuck, Boston.

"T'IS A COMMON PROOF,

That lowliness is young ambition's ladder
Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the Ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees,
By which he did ascend."—*Shakspeare.*

I wish to draw the attention of the multitude of Teachers, Publishers, &c. to the above: In their unjust and ungrateful imputations of the much abused simple method for the Banjo: the factor which has done a great deal in forwarding the Banjo to its present high standing among musical instruments; in that it has persuaded many to try instruments which they could attain a certain degree of proficiency, with so little cost of mental energy: and when once tried, the charm soon weds the player to greater efforts to attain the highest art in his newly wedded instrument.

It is like all good things, not the use but the abuse, that makes the object unworthy of respect and detestable in the sight of all honest people.

I do not wish to accord to the simple method a place in the musical literature; or advocate its use to the extent of dependency; but as a factor to young musical aspirants to keep them interested until they are able to read the regular music; then the use can be restrained, and the abuse will never be attained.

Any one with ordinary comprehension, will understand when to discontinue the simple: and take upon themselves the more onerous task of mastering the regular music, if he has the least spark of ambition in composition; if not, the instrument has lost nothing, but if he has, he may soon be an able exponent of the cause: to ably illustrate the beauties of Banjo music: he or she is one more in the list of Knights, that owe their spurs to the simple methods.

It is the edict of the multitude that brings the instrument, whatever it may be, into popular favor; and not the dicta of the simple Judge be he ever so learned.

The multitude has not that plegmatic disposition to spend years in discovering or experimenting in a new found art: when it has already been established in some other department or thing; but if it can be demonstrated or learned by some easy method; it will emulate many to the greater task of mastering it; when they know beyond peradventure, that when attained it will be an established fact.

It is but honest to accord to all things their just dues; the greater things are but offsprings of the smaller ones: the mighty oak, towering in its majesty, and scorning the tumultuous wind-storms, came from the little acorn.

I was first emulated to the study of the banjo by the insignificant simple method, and we now use it in conjunction with regular music in our teaching, and I think all of our scholars will attest its beneficial effects.

I never use it in my own study now, I have laid it aside, but have inscribed on the tombstone of my memory "Requiescat in pace."

E. G. HARBAUGH.

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Mr. Lew Crouch of Natick, Mass., the well known and popular teacher of that town is fitting new rooms, which the increase in his business demands. He is the agent for the Gatcomb Banjo. We are glad to announce that he is doing such a nice business.

Mr. W. N. Scranton of New Bedford, Mass. favored us with a visit a few days ago. Since he decided to go solely into the banjo business he has met with great success, so much so that he is fitting up some elegant rooms for next season. He is an affable gentleman and and an able teacher, both of which are prime factors of success. Verily the banjo is booming.

Mr. Geo. C. Barnard, the popular teacher of Springfield, Mass., has been in Boston for the past three weeks serving on the Grand Jury of the U. S. Court. He has returned to his business, which is very large and constantly increasing. There is a growing interest in the banjo in Springfield which he has had much to do with in developing.

We notice an account of a banjo contest which took place at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., May 16 under the direction of Prof. W. J. Connolly. The winners of the double banjo contest were Messrs. Gemmill and Ross of that town. First prize, gold medals; second prizes to Messrs. Petingale and Catlin, of Newburgh. Mr. Geo. S. Earl took first prize in the single contest and Mr. Gemmill, second. Mr. Ruby Brooks of New York charmed the audience with his skill.

Mrs. Myra Marie Cobb of Boston, recently gave a musical and literary entertainment of a high order in Rockland Hall which was a grand success, which can be said of all of this lady's ventures. Her duties as directress of the concert prevented her from any solo work but ample opportunity was given to hear her compositions and arrangements played by her pupils, of whom she can be justly proud.

Messrs. L. B. Gatcomb & Co., will publish shortly a collection of music from the pen of Mr. George H. Coes whom everyone will remember as a partner of Mr. Luke Schoolcraft. This music should be purchased by all banjo players as it is one of the best and most curious collections ever published. Mr. Coes being a musician of rare ability, his composi- will rank very high.

A Newport, N. H. newspaper of recent date contained the following notice which it gives us pleasure to publish:

"The Newport Ideal Banjo and Guitar Club gave a very pleasing entertainment at the town hall Tuesday evening, to a small but appreciative audience. The programme was a good one, consisting of solos, duets, quintets, trick playing, songs and dances. The club swinging of Fred Gamash was excellent, and as good as we ever saw. All the boys did well and deserved a better house. They will appear in Bradford to-morrow evening."

On Wednesday eve., May 16th Mr. Wm. A. Huntley of Providence, R. I. gave a Grand Banjo Concert in Infantry hall, Prov. which was an unqualified success. The great feature of the evening was a grand orchestra composed of fifty performers. Their execution of Mr. Huntley's arrangement of Boulanger's March was magnificent and took the vast audience by storm. Mr. Huntley played with that skill which has made him famous all over the country, and was ably assisted by his brother, Mr. Chas. H. Huntley. The Boston Ideal Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club and the Ladies' Schubert Quartette of Boston were features which also added lustre to this fine entertainment.

We are in receipt of a letter from Mr. Ed. Walsh of Quebec, Canada, wherein he says that he does not see how we can publish such a good paper for so little money. He also says that the "Invincible Guard March" by Shattuck is a beautiful composition and reflects much credit upon the composer. This is one of many letter of the same tenor which we are constantly receiving.

Banjoists should not fail to procure the beautiful new piece, "Darkies Patrol," from the facile pen of Mr. G. L. Lansing, which will soon be issued by L. B. Gatcomb & Co.

Mr. H. W. Harris has concluded a very successful season and will take a much needed rest in the cool climate of New Hampshire. His compositions for the Guitar and Mandolin have gained for him an envious reputation while his skill in imparting knowledge of his favorite instruments has drawn to him a large list of pupils which will no doubt be greatly increased next season.

Mr. M. J. Lefavour of Salem, Mass., the popular music dealer of that place reports a fine increase in his business and especially a growing interest in the banjo. He is the agent for the celebrated Gatcomb Banjos and Banjeaurines both of which instruments find a ready sale and never fail to meet the expectations of purchasers.

Master W. A. Cahoon of Chelsea, Mass., has appeared in Banjo selections at a number of concerts recently with great success and well deserved the applause he has gained. He is now enjoying his summer vacation.

Mr. D. W. Reeves will shortly publish the popular selection, "March Past," for Banjo. Mr. Lansing is to arrange it for first and second Banjo, Guitar and Banjeaurine.

Mr. F. W. Peabody, the popular music dealer of Haverhill, Mass. has sold the Gat comb Banjos and Banjeaurines exclusively for the past two years and says they give perfect satisfaction. Each instrument sold is sure to sell others.

Do your friends take the Gazette? If not, try and induce them to subscribe.

Messrs. Lansing & Shattuck spent the week of June 11th to 16th at Camp Framingham with the First Regiment, M. V. M. to which they are attached.

Look out for the great hit, "The Darkies Patrol," by G. L. Lansing (author of The Darkies Dream.) soon to be published.

The Boston Ideal Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club gave four concerts July 4th of the school children of Boston, being engaged by the city for that purpose. The club have added another novelty to their combination. The new instument is call a Banjolin.

Messrs. Lansing, Grover and Harris of the "Ideals" are expert Bicyclists.

The Everett (Mass.) Banjo Club played a very successful engagement in the Everett Town Hall a short time ago.

The Harvard College Banjo Club will be under the direction of Mr. Lansing next season.

Mr. E. M. Hall has recently composed a very fine Mazurka which he dedicated to the Ideal B. M. & G. Club of Boston.

Boston, May 31st, 1888.

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Dear Sirs:—After long and careful experience with your banjos I have no hesitation in saying that for tone, workmanship and finish they are second to none. I have yet to hear of an instance where they have not given perfect satisfaction in every respect. I have two of your instruments for my own use and they fully meet my wants in every particular.

Yours very truly,

L. H. GALEUCIA,

of the Boston Ideal Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club.

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There are guitar strings with a steel core over wound with silver wire which are comparatively new. These are only used for the four bass strings, viz: E. A. D. G. and are unsuited for anything else. The first, second and third strings should be of gut. We do not advise the use of wire strings for the first three, as the gut is the best and easiest for the fingers, but the new strings, which are known as composition strings are used by all first-class artists. We can furnish them at 15 cts. each. We are always glad to receive letters like yours and hope to hear from you again.

We present to our readers in this issue the portrait of Mr. A. D. Grover of Boston, Mass. This gentleman is so closely connected with the advance of the banjo up to its present position in the home and upon the concert stage, that a few words in regard to him will be of interest to all.

He was born in Boston in 1865 and commenced to study the banjo at the age of 13 and so rapid was his improvement that he commenced to teach in 1880 or two years later, he being then 15 years of age. He was one of the silent workers—one of the small army which kept battering away at the fortress of bigotry and unrecognition until its surrender. In 1884 he organized the "Ideal Banjo Trio" which was the nucleus of the "Boston Ideal Banjo Quartette" which was the name of the organization after Mr. Lansing became a member one year later. This Quartette did business for two years until, in 1887 the present famous "Boston Ideal Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club" was formed of the present members, with whom our readers are no doubt acquainted.

Mr. Grover is one of the soloists of the Ideal Club a position which his large experience and skill enables him to easily fiil.

It is safe to assert that, in the art of banjo juggling he has no superior as all who have witnessed his act would be willing to acknowledge.

When not off on concert trips he is engaged in business as a mechanical draughtsman with an office at No. 32 Pemberton Square, Boston, where anyone who will take the trouble to call on him will be assured of a kind and cordial welcome.

Mr. Grover has been associated and played with Mr. Lansing for ten years which fact will serve to indicate the friendly as well as professional ties which entwine these gentlemen.

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Two Banjos, . . . 35c.
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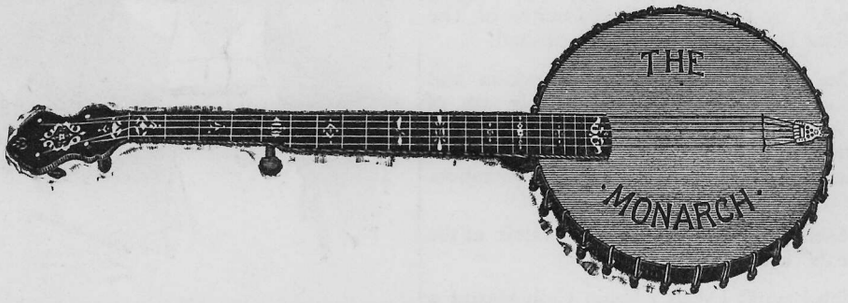

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Yours very truly,

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Manager Boston Ideal B. M. & G. Club.

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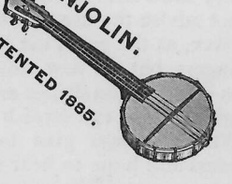

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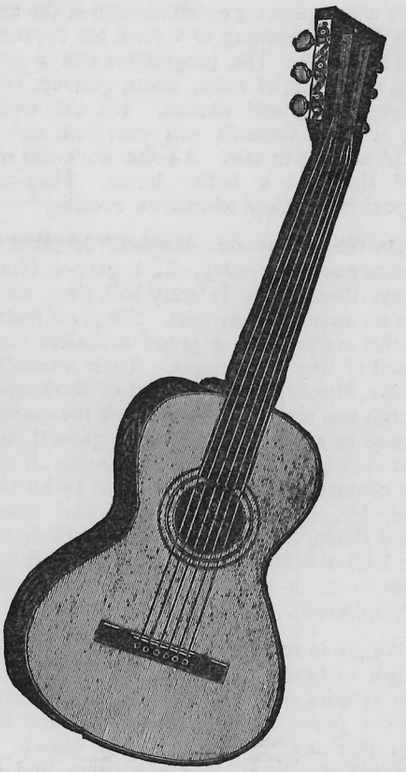

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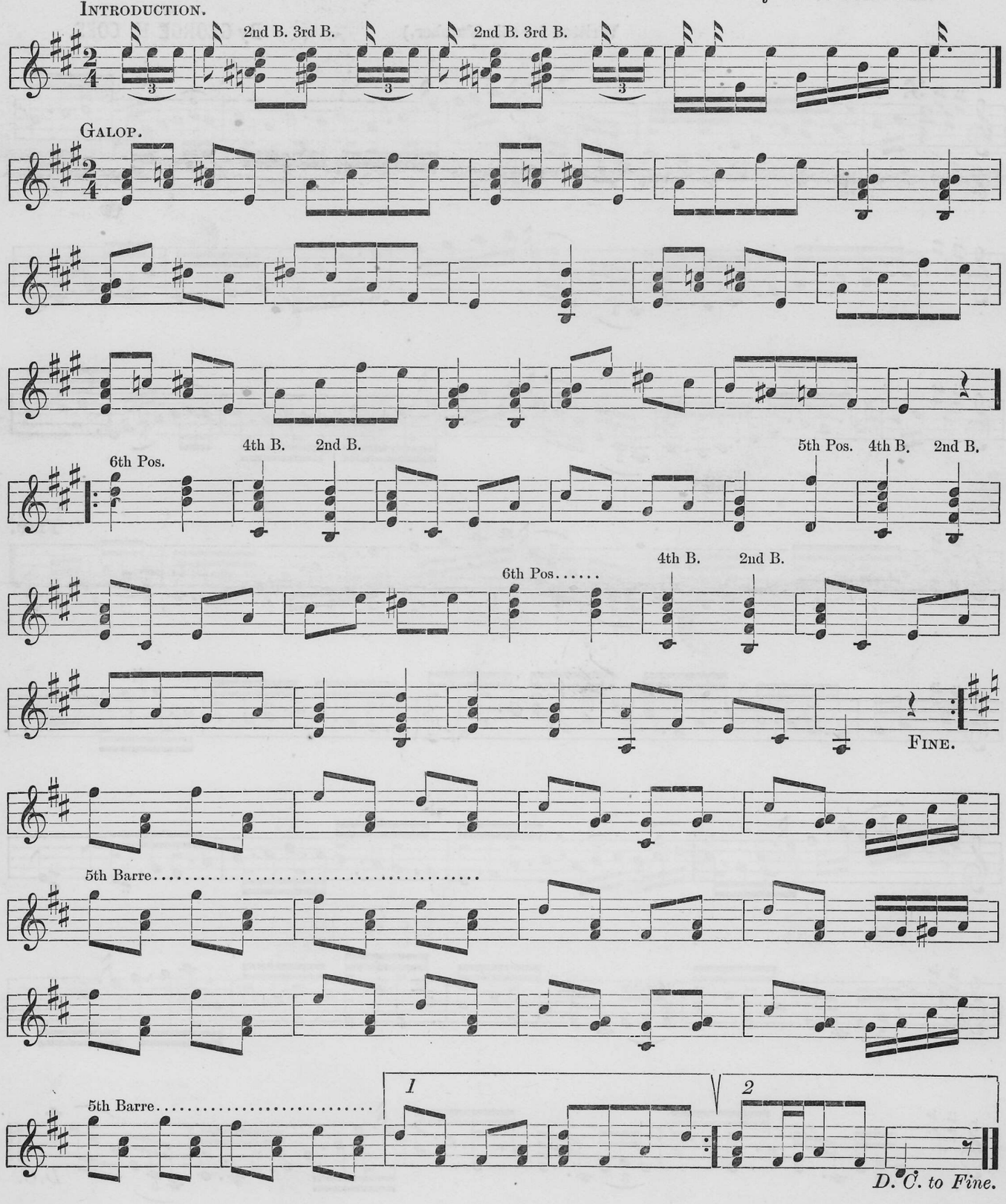

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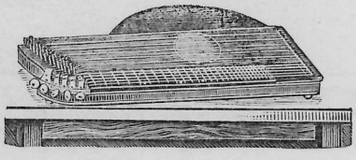

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